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CIA/RR CB 65-24
April 1965

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INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNIST POLICY
TOWARD STUDENTS FROM LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMUNIST POLICY
TOWARD STUDENTS FROM LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The anti-American demonstration by African and Asian students outside the American Embassy in Moscow on 4 March 1965 which, under skillful exploitation by Chinese Communist students, ultimately assumed a violent and decidedly anti-Soviet tone, was the most recent in a long history of clashes between nationals from less developed countries, on one hand, and Communist authorities and local Soviet students, on the other. The mid-March murder of a Ghanaian student at the Baku Preparatory School has threatened new demonstrations, and some Africans have already been reported boycotting classes at Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow. The cumulative impact of similar incidents in the past has prompted a perceptible stiffening of the Soviet attitude toward students from less developed countries. This change in attitude has been evident since January 1964. In recent months the Chinese have sought to manipulate and exploit such incidents in order to discredit the USSR in the eyes of the less developed countries. Such machinations have provided new impetus to official Soviet efforts to restrict the political activities of the more than 9,000 academic students from less developed countries presently studying in the USSR. Similar reactions are evident also among authorities in the Eastern European Communist countries.

1. Causes of Student Dissatisfaction

In general, racial incidents have been a major source of discontent among students from less developed countries, and complaints from African students have been the most profuse. The creation of a special university for such students -- the Peoples' Friendship University -- was interpreted by many, Asians as well as Africans, as segregationist in intent. Relations between African students and local girls have been at the root of a number of incidents involving physical beatings and the murder of African students by resentful Soviet students. Ostracism by the local population and isolation from the student bodies of the host country, ubiquitous surveillance and irksome systems of control over personal movements and associations, censorship of mail, and restrictions on travel have all added to the disillusionment.

A student complaint often expressed is that of financial hardship. Despite the relatively generous terms of Soviet scholarships whose

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monthly stipends exceed those given by the state to Soviet students, students from less developed countries maintain that normal living expenses in the USSR frequently exceed the allotments provided by the Soviet government. Expenditures on food reportedly run as high as two-thirds the monthly stipend of 90 rubles, and the clothing allotment allowance of 300 rubles, given once for a 5-year course of study, is deemed by many as insufficient. The necessity for supplementary funds from students' families and some home governments to provide help to ease the financial strain of students in the USSR belies original Soviet promises of "all-expense" scholarships.

Complaints about the curriculum and indoctrination also are common but are more frequent from students who have been previously exposed to Western educational systems and who have mastered the Russian language sufficiently to allow them to form an appraisal. Some students have complained that they were not allowed by the authorities to pursue their promised choice of study; and in some cases, certain fields of study have been denied them because of internal security considerations. The prevalence of such grievances has provided fertile ground for Chinese Communist students in the USSR to exploit student discontent along lines detrimental to Soviet interests.

2. Soviet Response

The Soviet response to the increased student disaffection has been a stiffening attitude toward the students' presence in general. In reaction to a demonstration in December 1963 that was organized and led by Ghanaian students after the death of one of their fellow students, a piqued Khrushchev bluntly declared that Africans could dance on their heads at home if they wished, but that they would not be allowed again to demonstrate in the USSR. He then offered exit visas to those students who did not like the treatment they were receiving in the USSR.

Following this warning, a decree was issued on 7 January 1964 by the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education stipulating regulations that were to govern the behavior and control of foreign students in the USSR. It affirmed that "foreign students, as well as Soviet students, who violate academic discipline or the established rules of the code of good behavior are subject to disciplinary punishment or may be expelled from an educational establishment." The foreign students were instructed

that public organizations of foreign students were to have no political nature -- that their main functions were to "help the authorities of educational establishments train foreign students to be well-qualified specialists" and "to cooperate with all those concerned." Students who did not conform to the regulations could be charged with "abuse of hospitality" and be subject to immediate deportation. Furthermore, such offenders could be prosecuted under Soviet criminal laws. 1/ The ambiguous definition of acceptable behavior in the regulations leaves much to the discretion of Soviet authorities in the determination of infractions.

The USSR has followed through on its "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude. The students who participated in the demonstrations in December 1963 protesting the death of a Ghanaian student were effectively prevented from presenting their grievances either to the Supreme Soviet, which was then in session, or to the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education. On the occasion of the demonstration in Moscow on 4 March of this year, Chinese-led Asian students engaged in violent clashes with Soviet militiamen who were protecting the American Embassy, on the grounds that the militiamen were obstructing an "anti-imperialist demonstration." The Soviet authorities then called out troops to back up the militia, and the demonstrators dispersed. Students from the Peoples' Friendship University were prevented from participating in both the February and March demonstrations inasmuch as they were required to attend classes while the demonstrations were in progress. The students reportedly were told that such activities were not sanctioned by the university, which had already acquired a bad name from participating in such activities in the past. 2/ Moreover, student political organizations not formally approved by the Soviet authorities have been banned. Students who wish to leave the USSR are given exit visas, although the Soviet government does not provide travel expenses home, ostensibly on the grounds that Soviet promises of round trip transportation were contingent on the students' satisfactory completion of a full course of study.

3. East European Reaction

In recent months, East European governments also have betrayed ill-disguised annoyance with the political activities and demonstrations of the more than 5,000 students from less developed countries in the area.

The establishment of political organizations by foreign students has been prohibited, and in Bulgaria, some Africans have left the country in protest against the restrictions. In December 1964, after Rumanian authorities forcefully broke up an incipient anti-American demonstration that was being organized by extremist foreign students to protest the US-Belgian airlift in the Congo, the late Rumanian leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej reportedly declared that, although Rumania was prepared to do its share in helping to educate people from other countries, it would do so on Rumanian terms and, if the beneficiaries of its generosity did not like it, they could get out. "In fact," he added, "Rumania needs these people just about as much as a dog needs fleas." 3/ Similarly, there are indications that Czechoslovak authorities are seeking to tighten up the selection criteria for students from less developed countries. It is hoped in Czechoslovakia that ultimately the bulk of training efforts for such students will take place in the less developed countries themselves and that only those students seeking postgraduate study will be brought to Czechoslovakia. 4/

4. More Stringent Selection Policy

Vexing though such problems must be to Communist authorities, there is no indication yet that such difficulties and the attendant bad publicity have led to any immediate revision of the Soviet Bloc's academic training programs for students from less developed countries. The tendency in Communist policy in the long run, however, may be in the direction of some effort to scale down its acceptance of students for study in the Soviet Bloc. Indeed, despite the undiminished flow of applications for scholarships by students from less developed countries, the Soviet Bloc in recent years has accepted a declining number of new students -- from more than 5,100 in 1962 to about 3,100 in 1963 to only a little more than 2,000 in 1964. The selection process probably will become more stringent, and admission will be limited primarily to those more academically inclined students whose political sympathies are already in accord with Soviet and East European policies. Almost certainly there will be less tolerance of independent political activity and demonstrations on the part of such students, particularly as such disturbances can be exploited by Communist China to discredit the influence and prestige of the USSR in less developed countries.

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Sources:

1. USSR, Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education.
Regulations Governing the Studies of Foreign Nationals in
the Peoples' Friendship University Named After Patrice
Lumumba, Moscow, 7 Jan 64. U.
2. State, Moscow. Airgram A-977, 16 Feb 65. OFF USE.
Ibid., A-1140, 15 Mar 65. OFF USE.
- 25X1C 3. [REDACTED] C/NO
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4. CIA. [REDACTED] S.
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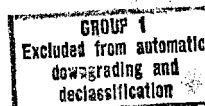
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116 - 154	Defense Intelligence Agency, DIAAQ-3, A Building, Arlington Hall Station
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171 - 172	Dr. Neilson Debevoise, NSC, Room 365, Executive Office Bldg.
173 - 174	Frank M. Charrette, Agency for International Development, Chief, Statistics and Reports Division, Room A-204, State Annex #10
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FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR
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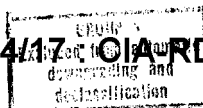
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Sources

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1. "Regulations Governing the Studies of Foreign Nationals in the

Peoples' Friendship University Named After Patrice Lumumba,"

Ministry of Higher and Specialized Education, Moscow, 7 January

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MEMORANDUM FOR: 25X1A [REDACTED]
FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR
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Similarly, there are indications that Czechoslovakian authorities are seeking to tighten up the selection criteria for students from developing countries. It is hoped that ultimately the bulk of their training efforts will take place in the less developed countries themselves and that only those students seeking postgraduate study will be brought to Czechoslovakia.

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